

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Monday, 3 December 2018

### Report of the Interim Executive Director of Education & Children's Services

#### Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:  
(All Divisions);

### Better For Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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#### Executive Summary

The Ofsted re-inspection of Children's Services in June 2018 noted significant improvements, with an overall effectiveness judgement of 'requires improvement' to be good, and 'good' for our adoption service. However, there is still more to do to ensure that all children receive a consistently good service. The Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan sets out the actions required to address the 11 recommendations in the report, further improving the quality of practice and outcomes for children.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order C19 have been complied with.

#### Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Approve the draft Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan, set out at Appendix 'A', noting there are some further details to be confirmed.
- (ii) Authorise the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools, to approve the final version of the plan.

#### Background and Advice

In Lancashire, our vision is that children and families in need of help are safe, healthy and supported to achieve.

The Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan articulates the outcomes we are seeking to achieve and how we are going to make sure we deliver them. It sits alongside our Purposeful Practice Framework and Corporate Parenting Strategy and is also part of a number of strategies and plans that fit together to deliver the improvement of Children's Services. The plan will also address the 11 recommendations in the Ofsted inspection report.

The plan will be shared with staff and partners to seek their feedback before being finalised.

The plan focuses on strengthening and improving the quality of practice in 5 key areas:

### 1. Prevention

Working with partners to ensure that an effective range of early help services are in place to support children and families when they first need help. We will continue to develop the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to ensure continued effective decision making and service provision at the front door.

### 2. Effective Partnership Working

We will ensure effective, collaborative partnership arrangements are in place which support the improvement of services to children and families. Specifically, with partners we will improve our response to children living with domestic abuse and neglect, ensuring services are focused on delivering effective, preventative and targeted support.

### 3. Purposeful Practice

Ensuring that everything we do makes a tangible and positive difference to the lives of the children we work for and that we intervene at the lowest and least intrusive level possible. Specifically, this means improving the quality of assessments and plans, and spelling out for families what needs to change and how this is likely to be achieved. We also need to strengthen the critical challenge of first line managers and Independent Reviewing Officers to prevent drift and delay.

### 4. Permanence and Corporate Parenting

Our first priority is to work tirelessly with families to prevent the need for children to become looked after. However, where children aren't able to live safely with their family, we will ensure that plans for permanence are developed at the earliest opportunity. We will also ensure care plans are more rigorously monitored and reviewed to reduce drift and delay, including the timely revocation of Care Orders where children have been successfully returned home.

We want all our children to meet their potential and therefore we will strive to improve educational attainment and health outcomes for our children and specifically

focus on improving the educational attainment and progress of children looked after at Key Stage 4. We want all children that leave our care to live healthy, successful, fulfilling lives and therefore we will ensure that all our care leavers receive timely and accessible support to meet their financial, educational and emotional health needs.

## 5. Effective Use of Performance Data

Whilst significant progress has been made in improving the accuracy of performance data, we need to improve the use of data so that it is an effective tool to help manager's measure progress and examine trends.

### Workforce Development:

In order to improve the quality of practice, in line with the recommendations made by Ofsted, we need to ensure we have a workforce with the right skills, support and tools to the job and provide strong leadership. The Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan therefore includes a section on workforce development.

### Sustainable Improvement:

This plan is set in the context of increasing demand for services and the county council is currently using structural reserve funding and faces continued financial pressures. We need to improve the way we manage demand for services and ensure that our improvement is sustainable. The plan therefore includes actions to support us in delivering the best and most efficient services.

## Consultations

N/A

### Implications:

The Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan will be reviewed and updated annually. The plan will drive and support the continuous improvement of Children's Services, maintaining focus and pace. The plan provides a framework for the next phase of our improvement journey, in line with our ambition that we deliver consistently good services to children and families in Lancashire.

## Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

## Risk management

In the absence of a development plan, there is a risk that the recommendations made by Ofsted will not be addressed. This would impact on outcomes for children and would also present a significant inspection risk. When Children's Services are re-inspected by Ofsted under Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services, we

will need to be able to evidence the action taken to address the recommendations and the impact this had in improving the quality of practice. The Better for Children: Lancashire's Children's Services Development Plan ensures clear accountability with a named lead and timescale for each recommendation.

### **List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A